



# Corruption: the bane of entrepreneurial development in vocational education in Nigeria

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## ABSTRACT

There are many unresolved enigmatic situations in Nigeria, but that of horrendous indiscipline, including corruption and other financial malpractices, is worrisome. The damage it has done to the nations' developing mono-sector economy is monumental. Consequently, the issue keeps reoccurring in every academic and informal discussion throughout the World, but it seems to be on the increase in Nigeria. Thus, it is believed by many in the society that corruption is the bane of Nigeria economic downturn. It is a known fact today in Nigeria that for a long time now things have gone wrong in almost all facets of human endeavours. Since 1976, successive governments (regimes) have made concerted efforts to eradicate, if not ameliorate the menace of corruption, but little or no success have been recorded. This has, for instance, given birth to the establishment of several regulatory bodies and enabling anti-graft laws in the country - the Code of Conduct Bureau and tribunal (CCBT), Standard Organization of Nigeria (SON), National Ethical Re-orientation Committee (NERC), War Against Indiscipline and Corruption (WAIC), Independent Corrupt Practices and other related Offences Commission (ICPC), Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), National Agency for Food and Drugs Administration and Control (NAFDAC), Consumer Protection Agency (CPA), National Broadcasting Commission (NBC), et cetera. Corruption has been a major challenge to entrepreneurship development in Nigeria especially in Vocational and Technical Education Development Programmes. It is imperative, therefore, to give it adequate attention so as to salvage Vocational and Technical Education from total collapse. However, this paper address the issue of concept of corruption, entrepreneurship, the role of entrepreneurship in the Economy, Vocational and Technical Education and the effects of corruption on entrepreneurship development in Nigeria.

**Key words:** Corruption, Entrepreneurship, and Vocational and Technical Education

## THE CONCEPT OF CORRUPTION

Corruption has for long been the biggest challenge to Nigeria development, private or public sector, technological, socio – political and cultural. The astronomical rising spate of corrupt practices is high in Nigeria that there is hardly any sector that it cannot be found.

The endemic chameleon faeces, Corruption has become amica in almost all human endeavours in the World, particularly in developing African countries including Nigeria, that it has been variously defined by people, depending on different perception, practice and form it takes. It is a term that has been perceived differently by various scholars, that it has attracted competing numerous views and approaches in recent times. To economic and financial parlance, it entails fraudulent conduct by finance operators who have access to and manipulate financial apparatus of any endeavour. This involves such financial indiscipline as embezzlement, mismanagement, misappropriation of funds, defalcation of assets, falsification of records, inflation of prices, et cetera. To some others, it entails fraudulent conducts of those in power. Such as bribery, deception, illegitimate use of power in acquiring benefit or undue advantage for personal or private interest. It is a criminal act of deceptively attracting certain benefit to oneself at the expense of other people. It is a criminal act of indiscipline that has pervaded all facet of the nation's economy that almost all citizens, home and abroad are coloured with the indelible bad paint. It is a complex social, economic and political phenomenon, involving wrong-doing on the part of an authority or powerful party/individuals through means that are illegitimate.

Corruption is an act which deviates from the accepted rules governing the actions of people in position of authority because of selfish motives such as greed for wealth, power and status. It is the perversion of integrity or state of affairs enhanced through bribery, favour or moral depravity. It takes place when an individual or group of persons decided to change from the generally acceptable code of conduct in order to dishonest, unfaithful or defiled situations. In other worlds, corruption is a systematic vice in an individual or group of persons which reflects favouritism, nepotism, tribalism, sectionalism, undue enrichment, misappropriation of public funds, embezzlement, bribery, sleaze, vice, dishonesty, alterations, distortion, amassing of wealth, abuse of office, power, position and derivation of undue gains and benefits.

Dike (2015), describes corruption is an anti-social behavior conferring improper benefits contrary to legal and moral norms and which undermine the authorities to improve the living condition of the people. In encompasses any behaviour that is defiant to moral codes of conducts in Nigeria and World-wide.

From the foregoing, corruption has been identified as the primary hindrance to the Nigeria's economic, political and social progress. It is a dastardly and heinous fraudulent act through which people accumulate quick wealth in Nigeria. It occurs in many forms and has contributed immensely to slow development in Nigeria, including entrepreneurship. Nearly all sectors of the nation economy are enshrined in corrupt practices, though with different forms or faces. For instance, in politics, it usually takes different forms, ranging from deceit to bribery, rigging in election, embezzlement, inflation of contracts, nepotism, god-fatherism, looting of public fund, exploitation, imposition of candidates, threatening and killing others, snatching of ballot boxes, cult tactics in recruiting political candidates, extortion of money from political candidates, threatening and killing of opponents, looting of treasury with impunity.

It is no gain-saying that Nigeria in the last two decades has been products of spoilt educational system. In the nation's educational sector, the agencies and stakeholders in educational delivery are also corrosively corrupt. While the developed countries like China, India, Brazil, Japan and United State are daily engaged in tailoring their educational systems towards producing top-notch in Management information technologists, scientists, doctors engineers, Nigeria educational system is busy producing individuals who are perpetually pre-occupied with all sorts of indiscipline and exploitation of the society for their personal benefits. Nigeria educational planners are not doing the planning and designing of school curricular for the sake of God and nation's development; every decision make have secrete political and economic undertone. These range from poor curriculum planning and designing, indiscriminate establishment, approval and citing of institutions, poor funding, unavailability and inadequate supply of required modern-day facilities and equipment for practical instructions in schools laboratories and workshops, bribery and kickbacks, nepotism, extortion and exploitation, harassment, collusion, forgery and misrepresentation. Or what do we say of the facilities and equipment supplied to schools during the days of Western Region not to talk of the technical education equipment and workshops made available in public Secondary Schools, Technical Colleges and Tertiary institutions in old Oyo State of Nigeria by UPN government in early 80s? The laboratories and workshops meant for training students, the supposed would be economic deciders of today Nigeria have been converted to classrooms while the equipment were sold out to roadside artisans, who themselves are heavily corrupt.

Nigeria in the last two decades has been entrapped in spoilt educational system. Morality and ethics are no more important virtue of civility in the nation's educational institutions. Teachers, instructors, professors and even the students in the nation's educational institutions are bedeviled in heinous acts of corruption – extortion, exploitation, harassment, truancy, cheating, manipulation of scores and results, hooliganism and cultism. The situation is worst nowadays that it seems impossible to be a saint in Nigeria of today where the entire socio-political fabric is enmeshed in wanton corruption.

## FACTORS FOR CORRUPTION IN NIGERIA

The masquerade heinous act of corruption that has be-devilled all facets of Nigeria economy, no doubt, have its stem from the following factors:

**Bad Leadership:** Fast majority of our leaders in Nigeria have undue lust for wealth accumulation at the expense of nation's development. The ideology of the nation multi-political party presidential and porous legal systems do not allow for transparency, probity and accountability, hence the wanton promotion of financial indiscipline, unabated corruption and fraudulent practices, with impunity and its attendant implication of non-innovation, thereby stagnating the country's economy on mono-sartorial status.

**Poverty:** Majority of people's inability to get the required means of survival in terms of good feeding, clothes, houses, health, education have considerably influenced them into corrupt practices. If people are enterprise and gainfully employed, they will be contented and thereby lower tendency for them engaging in corrupt and fraudulent practices.

**Lawlessness:** Legal system in Nigeria is highly porous and too loose that people illegally amass wealth without any recourse to legal implications. They do this with every impunity, having the assurance of getting over it with time through legal manipulation. Thus, such money that can be used for entrepreneurship development in the nation's economy are been carted away by pen-robbers in the public offices and big-wigs who are sacred-cows in the nation's political system. Some citizens are so influential and powerful that their excesses cannot be checked. They, according to Ogunwole (2016), are the brain behind almost the atrocities that hampered development in Nigeria; such misdemeanor acts as drug peddling, religious riots, assassinations, bomb blast, kidnapping, armed robbery misappropriation, embezzlement of public funds and recently of course, budget paddling. The law enforcement agents play their own roles in promoting corruption in the country. The Nigerian police, custom, Federal Road Safety Corps (FRSC), Vehicle Inspection Officers (VIO), Immigration Officers, National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA), are heavily corrupt; even the legislative arms with their oversight functions are not left out of the dastardly act of financial impropriety in circumventing entrepreneurial development in Nigeria.

**Poor Conditions of Service:** The pitiable poor conditions of service for civil servants in the nation's civil service have also majorly contributed to corruption in the country. The civil servants who apart from being poorly remunerated when in active service are not also not sure of when they will get their entitlements (retirement benefits) from the government when they retire; occasioned with meeting their family needs; hence they are often lured into unlawfully amassment of wealth for the rainy days ahead and which they cannot reinvest into profitable productive ventures within the economy out of the fare of been apprehended by anti-graft agencies in the country.

**Unabridged Gap between Economic Status:** The ever widened economic status between the income levelers, rich and poor, is much that the lower income earners would want to level with, or at least, closer to the high income earner in the face of market economic forces. The poor as a result of their inability to support their financial commitment may resort to partaking or embarking in any social vices, including corruption.

**Poor Orientation:** The general orientation in Nigeria society is that nobody is free of corruption; nothing meaningful can be done outside corruption, even in the places of worship, the slogan is 'nothing goes freely for nothing' if you can beat them, you have to join them'. The judiciary is also corrupt. The recent cases of corruption involving legal luminaries, legislators, Supreme and High Court Judges in Nigeria are clear testimony of corrupt tendencies among Nigerian society. Who then makes, solicits advocates and interprets the law for others in the country? How will there be good and favourable policies on entrepreneurship development towards transforming the nation's recess economy in the face of wanton fraudulent and corrupt practices? Isiaka (2016) recently lamented that people amass wealth in billions and trillions of Naira and other major currencies of the World, that infrastructural development and social investment including education in the country are been greatly affected..

## THE CONCEPT OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Kurya (2006) stated that entrepreneurship is the willingness and ability of an individual to seek out investment opportunities to establish and run an enterprise in order to make profit. Kurya, (2006) opines that entrepreneurship is an attempt to create value through recognition of business appropriate to the opportunity and through the communicative and management skills to mobilize human, financial and material resources necessary to bring a project to function with an intent to make profit. In the same vein, entrepreneurship can be described as a process which involves the transformation of innovative and creative ideas into profitable activities.

From the forgoing, it shows that those activities designed to produce an entrepreneur are what is regarded as entrepreneurship, which is applicable in agricultural development, where opportunities in the occupation relating to livestock production and crop husbandry are identified, executed and managed with human efforts to make profit.

Ihenunekwu, (2003) sees an entrepreneur from business or management concepts which are regarded as a man who perceives business opportunities and take advantages of the scarce resources to use them. He went further to say that an entrepreneur is a person who bears the non insurable risks, directs human and material resources to his business objectives.

According to Ogundele and Olayemi (2005) an entrepreneur is regarded as an agent of social transformation, because he create new organization, new employment, stimulate indigenous technology, motivate employee and play a number of leadership roles.

Ademola (2006), an entrepreneur is an agent of social, economic development and positive change because he initiate innovation ideas that spearheaded the establishment of new forms of social and business enterprise. It is, therefore, succinct to describe him as an individual or agent who initiates, designs, mobilizes, finances, controls and coordinates other economic resources in most appropriate mix towards optimal production processes.

## CONCEPT OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP DEVELOPMENT

Entrepreneurship development is the process of engaging modernization, material advancement, industrialization, adoption of scientific and technological approach into entrepreneurial activities in order to promote total transformation towards increased quantity and quality of goods and services for the human wants-satisfaction and national growth..

Entrepreneurship development is achieved through advocacy of policy formation. The entrepreneurial development policy is statements that are expected to give direction to the development skill acquisition towards individual self-reliance and national economic sovereignty.

The objective of such policy includes:

1. To achieve self sufficiency in food and cash crop
2. To sustain food production and processing of food crops
3. To ensure availability of raw materials needed for agro-industries
4. Improvement in the quality of life for rural dwellers
5. To encourage modernization of agricultural production
6. Provision of agricultural insurance to overcome risk
7. To generate employment and reduce poverty. Its through this that the needed development will have direction and become achievable.

## IMPERATIVE OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Ihenunekwu, (2003) enumerates the following as the importance of entrepreneurship in national development:

**Economic Growth and Productivity;** Because it meets the needs of the local community and promotes the development of cottage industries in terms of production of goods and services that are important to the well-being, comfort and happiness of individuals and society at large.

**Self-employment;** entrepreneurship helps in ameliorating the problem of unemployment and other social vices. It is a fact today that the biggest employer of labour is the private business sector. Millions of jobs are provided by the factories, service industries, agricultural enterprises and the numerous small-scale businesses all over the world.

**Technological Advancement;** Entrepreneurship introduces something new and /or something different in to the economy. Every year, there are new technologies and new products. All of these are intended to satisfy human needs in more convenient and pleasant way, such entrepreneurial spirit has greatly contributed to the modernization of the economy.

**Poverty Alleviation;** Entrepreneurs are usually motivated in their activities not only for their desire to make profit but by the desire for them to contribute their quarter to national development. Thus, increase in per capital income which is perhaps accompanied by increase in the nation's Gross Domestic Product (GDP). This promotes the upliftment of human labour in the society.

**Mobilization for Capital Resources:** Entrepreneurs are the organizers and coordinators of the major factors of production, such as land, labour and capital. They properly mix these factors of production to create goods and services. Capital resources from a layman's understanding refer to money. However, in economics, its goes beyond that to includes machines, building and other physical productive resources. Entrepreneurs have initiative and self-confidence in mobilizing and accumulating capital resources for new business and business expansion. However, considering the pivotal role of entrepreneurship in Nigeria, it is surrounded by corruption and/or corrupt acts which have prevent its development in Nigeria.

## EFFECTS OF CORRUPTION ON ENTREPRENEURSHIP DEVELOPMENT

**Inadequate Working Capital:** The availability of capital is central to the establishment and continued existence of any enterprise regardless of the size, focus and objective. It has been observed that for an entrepreneur in Nigeria to start a business he must have funds or adopt a strategy to mobilize adequate funds. Banks have before now being reluctant to give out loans to potential entrepreneurs. The procedures for accessing such credits are often rigorous and dependent on the provision of collaterals which most entrepreneur are deficient. Over the years, Government, in partnership with the private sector have made efforts to initiate generous credit schemes and micro-financial institutions, such as Agricultural and Cooperative Banks, Industrial Development Centre to start a business and provide facilities for on-the-job training etc. But the reverse is often the case where such credit facilities are diverted through corrupt practices.

**Lack of Infrastructural Facilities:** Infrastructural facilities such as good roads, water supply, constant power supply, access to information and communication technology and other tools of trade are presently lacking in a country, thus entrepreneurial development is adversely affected. Also, in Nigeria, this basic work tool as well as the enabling environment is lacking, but year after year government spends billions of naira in the name of providing same infrastructures with unending promises and politicking. Presently power sector has proven the greatest challenge to any aspiring entrepreneur in agricultural related business. Power supply epileptic and most time business have to be run on generators. The cost of this alternative source of power often erode whatever profit or capital an entrepreneur has put aside for his farm enterprise. This problem adds immensely to overhead cost and unnecessarily makes the cost of production very high. Closely related to infrastructures problem is lack of adequate security for lives and property and the helplessness fostered on the citizens by the police that has most often than not proved incapable of addressing the urgent and constant security challenges over the years. Any enterprise that is serious about doing business has to put in place their security structures. The process of employing this private security personal put a big hole in the pockets of the business entrepreneurs. All these put together have made entrepreneurial activities to be a game of survival of the fittest. The manifested indices are shady dealings raging from deceit, unfaithfulness, insincerity, fraud, production of fake and substandard products and service.

**Lack of Enabling Environment for Vocational and Technical Educational Programmes:** It's unfortunate that the role of education in forming young people to become agents of national development seems to have been ignored. The schools are not adequately funded, equipped and managed to produce the required optimum potentials. Yet funds amounted to billions of naira are being expended by the government yearly with the aim of proving learning infrastructure and facilities but all to no avail.

**Poverty:** Corruption breeds poverty. Corrupt enrichment and other fraudulent acts of individuals at the expense of others are capable of retarding entrepreneurship development. Thus, lack of creativity, unemployment, hunger and youth restiveness with other social vices will set in, thereby impeding the nation development.

## CONCLUSION

There is no doubt that entrepreneurship has the potentials to contribute immensely to nation's entrepreneurial development in terms of job creation, poverty alleviation, increase in per capital income, high productivity and employment generation leading to the nation's increased Gross Domestic Product (GDP). However, such has ever been a dream in the country as corruption has eaten deep into the fabrics of every facet of the economy, including education, thereby making the citizens wallowing in abject poverty, youth restiveness, insecurity of lives and property and then economic stagnation. Therefore, there has to be proactive measures against the incidences of this psychological beast, corruption that has become chameleon faeces in Nigeria no doubt calls for adoption of proactive approach to checkmate.

### Recommendations

- Through, the present administration has set machineries in place to salvage the image of the nation; for instance the campaign for Re-branding Nigeria Project etc. The fight against corruption is a general responsibility to all. The political, social and economic sectors should strive to imbibe the values of honesty, modesty, sincerity, discipline and sound ethical moral standard.
- Men of integrity should be appointed to spearhead and run the activities of anti-corruption, law enforcement and regulatory agencies in the country as ICPC, EFCC, SON, NAFDAC, NPF, VIO, FRSC, NDLEA, etc.
- Government should equally create conducive environment for such agencies to operate without unnecessary interference.
- Regulatory guideline, issuance of license and the access to credit facilities should be made easier and less cumbersome to enhance entrepreneurial development in Vocational and Technical Education.
- Vocational and Technical Education should be promoted and well funded.

- Stiffer punitive measures should be injected and into the nation's legal system and sanctions made against any culprit.

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